

## **Congressman Childers Votes to Strengthen Veterans' Health Services, Increase Access to Health Care for Rural Veterans**

April 22, 2010

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Travis Childers (MS-01) last night voted to ensure that veterans and their families get the care and support they need and deserve after they put their lives on the line defending our country. The *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act* will reform and improve Mississippi veterans' health services by increasing access to health care for veterans in rural areas, supporting wounded veterans and their families and caregivers, and improving mental health services. The bill will also expand care for female veterans.

"Our soldiers serve with honor and when they come home, they deserve the best services we can offer," said Rep. Childers. "This important legislation will improve health care for Mississippi veterans by increasing access to care in rural areas, raising our troops' salaries, and helping smooth their transition back from the battlefield. This bill will ensure that we can address the changing medical needs of our veterans and that all our veterans have full access to quality health care."

The *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act* will improve access to care for veterans in rural areas by expanding transportation for veterans to local VA hospitals and clinics through VA grants to local Veterans Service Organizations, as well as creating a pilot incentive program for VA physicians who choose to work at community hospitals in provider-shortage areas.

In addition, the bill will ensure that the VA can better treat veterans suffering from mental health issues, and provide the VA with resources to learn more about the tragically high suicide rate among veterans. This legislation will also support family members and caregivers who look after our injured veterans to bring them the relief they deserve. To address the unique needs of the growing number of returning women soldiers, this bill will improve health services for almost 2 million female veterans.

The bill is supported by a broad coalition of veterans groups including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Wounded Warriors Project and the National Military Family Association.

*A pro-gun, pro-life Mississippian, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) represents the First Congressional District in North Mississippi. He is a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and serves on the House Agriculture and Financial Services Committee. Congressman Childers co-chairs the reestablished bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus and was appointed to the bipartisan Second Amendment Task Force. For more information, visit [www.childers.house.gov](http://www.childers.house.gov)*